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President: Mr. Shava (Vice-President) ..... (Zimbabwe)

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In the absence of Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation (E/2016/15, E/2016/15/Add.1, E/2016/16, E/2016/17, E/2016/18, E/2016/19, E/2016/20, A/70/677-E/2016/48 and A/70/677/Add.1-E/2016/48/Add.1)

1. **Mr. Nour** (Director, Regional Commissions New York Office), accompanying his intervention with a digital slide presentation, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2016/15); and its addendum (E/2016/15/Add.1), containing four draft resolutions for endorsement by the Council, three related to support by regional commissions to their member States and one related to the venue for the thirty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as a number of matters brought to the Council's attention.

2. **The President** drew the Council's attention to the summaries of the surveys prepared by the regional commissions on the economic and social conditions in their respective regions, as contained in documents E/2016/16 through E/2016/20.

3. **Mr. Gopinathan** (Chairman, Joint Inspection Unit) introduced the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled "Cooperation among the United Nations regional commissions", contained in document A/70/677-E/2016/48. The findings and conclusions of the report were relevant in view of the ongoing debate on the role of the regional commissions in addressing global challenges, especially in the context of United Nations systems support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. **Mr. Nour** (Director, Regional Commissions New York Office) introduced the note by the Secretary-General containing his comments and those of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/70/677/Add.1-E/2016/48/Add.1). Of the recommendations addressed to the executive secretaries, recommendations 1, 2 and 4 were already being implemented; the technical details of recommendation 3 were being ironed out. Of the recommendations addressed to the Council, recommendations 5 and 6 were being implemented; he highlighted the Secretary-General's alternative proposal with regard to recommendation 7, which had been made in view of the labour involved in producing the proposed reports.

Action on recommendations contained in the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2016/15/Add.1)

5. **The President** drew attention to the draft resolutions contained in chapter I, sections A, B and C of the addendum to the report, and reminded delegations that statements of the programme and budget implications of the three draft resolutions had been circulated by the Secretariat.

Draft resolution I: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia strategy and plan of action on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (section A)

Draft resolution II: Committing to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (section B)

Draft resolution III: Establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development (section C)

6. **The President** suggested deferring action on draft resolutions I, II and III to allow more time for consultation.

7. **Mr. Aguirre Vacchieri** (Chile) said that he did not understand the rationale for postponing action on draft resolution III. If there was a particular problem with the draft resolution, it should be stated.

8. **Mr. Abbas** (Lebanon) said that the rationale for postponement of all three draft resolutions was unclear. Deferring action would negatively impact the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, especially in the Western Asia region.

9. **Mr. Al-Musawi** (Iraq) said that deferral of action would impact the capacity of the relevant economic and social commissions to deliver their mandates, and might affect the Secretary-General's approval of the resources required to implement the 2030 Agenda.

10. **Mr. Henderson** (Australia) said that he supported deferring action on draft resolutions I and II until April 2017, but agreed with the representative of Chile that draft resolution III could be adopted immediately.

11. **Mr. Bhatti** (Pakistan) said that deferral of action on the draft resolutions would have serious implications for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. It was up to countries to set the priorities for their regions, and the Council should not hinder that process. If there were specific problems, it made sense to discuss them immediately.

12. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) agreed that the rationale for postponing the decisions was unclear. No delegation had raised any concerns during the debate on the draft resolutions.

13. **Ms. Hua** Ye (China) said that her delegation was concerned that deferring action on draft resolution II would have a negative impact on implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Asia and Pacific region.

14. **The President** said that there was a consensus that action should not be deferred and invited the Council to take action on draft resolutions I, II and III.

Draft resolution I: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia strategy and plan of action on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

15. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Council) said that implementation of the requests contained in draft resolution I would require the following additional recurrent activities and resources under Section 22, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 (Sect. 22)): consultants ($155,000), experts ($226,700), travel of staff ($34,500), and contractual services ($50,000) under subprogramme 1 (integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development); posts ($283,000), consultants ($298,400), experts ($292,500), travel of staff ($57,100) and contractual services ($41,200) under subprogramme 2 (social development); consultants ($20,000) under subprogramme 3 (economic development and integration); consultants ($114,000), experts ($107,800), travel of staff ($20,000) and contractual services ($11,000) under subprogramme 4 (technology for development and regional integration); consultants ($46,400) and travel of staff ($16,400) under subprogramme 5 (statistics for evidence-based policymaking); consultants ($20,000), experts ($29,800), travel of staff ($4,000) and contractual services ($6,000) under subprogramme 6 (advancement of women); and consultants ($20,000), experts ($29,800), travel of staff ($4,000) and contractual services ($6,000) under subprogramme 7 (conflict mitigation and development).

16. Should the Council adopt the resolution, it was estimated that total recurrent additional resources in the amount of $1,893,600 would arise under Section 22 of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. An amount of $3,039,300 would also arise in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019. Those recurrent resources would be required until 2030, in line with the duration of the mandate. The implementation of the requests contained in the draft resolution would require programmatic modifications to Section 22 of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

17. In accordance with established procedures, the additional requirements would be brought to the attention of the General Assembly, at its seventy-first session, in the context of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its 2016 session. The requirements for the biennium 2018-2019 would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

18. **Mr. Gave** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union recognized the importance of the work undertaken by the regional commissions and was strongly committed to implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, when the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) had adopted resolution 322, the members of the regional commission had not received any estimates of programme budget implications, only very general information indicating that budget implications were highly likely. The European Union therefore wished to request a vote on draft resolution I since the rules and regulations of the United Nations had been unjustifiably violated, including rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions, rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and regulation 2.10 of the financial rules and regulations. The European Union rejected the statement on the programme budget implications and was unable to endorse a resolution linked to a statement that violated the rules in such a manner.

19. Resolution 322 had been negotiated by only 18 countries. None of the members of the European Union had participated in those discussions, yet they

were being asked to adopt a text with major budget implications, which was both a violation of the rules and ran counter to the spirit of multilateralism. The States members of European Union would be voting against the resolution and they urged other Member States to do likewise. Lastly, future draft resolutions of the Council should use the word "adopt" rather than "endorse" since the Council was a supervisory body and had the authority to approve or overrule decisions taken by the regional commissions.

20. **Mr. Dolbow** (United States of America) said that his delegation was extremely displeased with the multi-million dollar programme budget implications for the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 bienniums associated with draft resolution I. ESCWA had requested a statement of programme budget implications from the budget office of the Economic and Social Council only one day before the resolution was scheduled to be adopted. It was very disappointing that ESCWA should have tabled such a long and complex resolution for adoption without allowing sufficient time for the budget office to consider its impact and it was unacceptable that such large programme budget implications should be incurred without substantive input from all States Members of the United Nations. The United States was therefore unable to support the resolution and in future ESCWA should arrange for informal negotiations to take place in New York so that resolutions with significant programme budget implications could be debated by Member States.

21. *At the request of the representative of France on behalf of the European Union, a recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Congo, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation.

22. *Draft resolution I was adopted by 28 votes to 16, with 3 abstentions.**

23. **Mr. Henderson** (Australia) said that, regrettably, Australia had had to vote against the resolution. While Australia supported the work being undertaken by ESCWA to implement the 2030 Agenda, the last-minute introduction of programme budget implications into the draft resolution represented extremely poor practice. It was unacceptable for Member States to be advised of substantial budget implications after the resolution had been adopted by the regional commission. Australia was unable to support a resolution that undermined due process and breached the principles of transparency and accountability. It encouraged the ESCWA secretariat to provide information on all budget implications in advance of regional commission meetings so that they could undergo the appropriate scrutiny.

24. While fully supportive of the work of ESCWA, the observer delegation of Canada aligned itself with his statement.

25. **Mr. Imada** (Japan) said that follow-up at the regional level should be inclusive, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, and regional commissions should optimize their existing frameworks and resources rather than expand them. No statement of programme budget implications had been published when resolution 322 was adopted by ESCWA in December 2015. Issuing a statement of programme budget implications after the resolution had already been adopted represented a clear violation of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions and Japan was thus unable to endorse resolution 322. The estimates presented in the statement should not prejudge future discussions on the revised estimates of the regular budget for the biennium 2016-2017 by Member States in the Fifth Committee and should not be construed as an endorsement by Member States. Lastly, he urged ESCWA to make further efforts to reduce the estimates.

Draft resolution II: Committing to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

26. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Council) said that implementation of the requests contained in draft

* The delegation of Nigeria subsequently informed the Council that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

resolution II would require the following additional annual activities and resources starting 2017, under Section 19, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 (Sect. 19)): posts ($81,800), consultants ($10,000), ad-hoc expert groups ($208,800), and travel of staff ($16,200) under subprogramme 4 (environment and development); consultants ($40,000), ad-hoc expert groups ($30,000), travel of staff ($10,000) and contractual services ($10,000) under subprogramme 6 (social development); consultants ($20,000) under subprogramme 3 (transport); and posts ($81,800) under subprogramme 7 (statistics).

27. Should the Council adopt the resolution, it was estimated that total recurrent additional resources in the amount of $488,600 would arise under Section 19 of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. An amount of $1,245,200 would also arise in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019. Those recurrent resources would be required until 2030, in line with the duration of the mandate. The implementation of the requests contained in the draft resolution would require programmatic modifications to Section 19 of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

28. In accordance with established procedures, the additional requirements would be brought to the attention of the General Assembly, at its seventy-first session, in the context of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its 2016 session. The requirements for the biennium 2018-2019 would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

29. **Mr. Imada** (Japan) said that resolution 72/6 of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had been adopted in Bangkok in May 2016 on the basis of an oral statement by the secretariat that there would be no programme budget implications for the biennium 2016-2017. He had before him a copy of that statement, which was contained in document E/ESCAP/72/L.3/Add.1. However, in violation of the rules of procedures of the Council and its functional commissions, it had been contradicted by the oral statement just delivered by the Secretary. The Council must not endorse resolution 72/6 and his delegation wished to request a vote.

30. **Ms. O'Connor** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said in a general statement that the States members of the European Union would be voting against draft resolution II. The oral statement on programme budget implications arising from the resolution constituted an unacceptable violation of the applicable rules of procedure and the members of the European Union strongly objected to it. It was clear that the States members of ESCAP had been misled by the ESCAP secretariat; the information provided in the oral statement that had formed the basis for the adoption of resolution 72/6 had since been radically altered. The States members of the European Union were disappointed by the ESCAP secretariat's handling of the situation and its refusal to revisit its position, as they had urged it to do during informal meetings.

31. **Mr. Dolbow** (United States of America) said in a general statement that his delegation was extremely displeased with the programme budget implications for 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 associated with the ESCAP resolution. Although the United States supported the substantive content of the resolution, it was unable to support it owing to the large programme budget implications and the non-transparent way in which they had been incurred. It was completely unacceptable that the ESCAP secretariat should have assured its member States in writing that there would be no programme budget implications yet should subsequently claim a need for almost $500,000 in funding over the current biennium. Such behaviour undermined the trust of Member States in ESCAP and it must not be repeated. At the same time, the United States looked forward to continuing its productive relationship with ESCAP on the important task of promoting sustainable development in the Asia and Pacific region.

32. *At the request of the representative of Japan, a recorded vote was taken on draft resolution II.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Congo, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

Abstaining:

Republic of Korea and Russian Federation.

33. *Draft resolution II was adopted by 29 votes to 16, with 2 abstentions.*

34. **Mr. Henderson** (Australia) said that it was with regret that Australia had had to vote against the draft resolution. The last- minute introduction of programme budget implications into the draft resolution was extremely poor practice. Australia remained supportive of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) undertaking work though the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Asia-Pacific region. However, it was deeply concerned by the opaque manner in which additional funding had been sought by ESCAP to support that work. At no point throughout the proceedings had ESCAP formally requested Member State support for an additional budget to implement its work. At the 2016 Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Australia had supported calls for the ESCAP secretariat to implement the ongoing work of the Forum through existing resource allocations. It had supported the final resolution in the belief that the resolution did not contain any programme budget implications. It was therefore unacceptable for Member States to be advised, after its adoption, that the draft resolution did in fact contain substantial programme budget implications, not just for the current biennium, but also after 2030. Programme budget implications must be made clear at the outset and Member States must be given full opportunity to interrogate and discuss them. Australia could not support a resolution that undermined due process and breached the principles of transparency and accountability. It encouraged the ESCAP secretariat to provide advice on all programme budget implications in advance of the meeting of the regional commission in order that they could undergo appropriate screening.

35. While fully supportive of the work of ESCAP, the observer delegation of Canada aligned itself with his statement.

36. **Mr. Imada** (Japan) said that Japan, as a member of ESCAP, was committed to engaging constructively with and designing the roles that ESCAP could play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. It was the spirit of the 2030 Agenda and the strong hope of Japan that any follow-up or review at the regional level should be done in the most inclusive, efficient and cost-effective manner possible. Japan thus firmly believed that the United Nations regional commissions should optimize the existing frameworks and resources, not merely expand the bureaucracy or increase the level of resources that regional commissions drew from the United Nations regular budget.

37. In May 2016, a series of resolutions, including resolution 72/6, had been adopted by ESCAP on the basis of the statement made by the ESCAP secretariat, clearly stating that any adopted resolutions would have no programme budget implications for the approved programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. Japan was of the view that issuing a different oral statement after the adoption of the resolution violated the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and was therefore not able to endorse it. For the above reasons, Japan was of the view that the estimates presented in the new statement should not prejudge future discussions on the revised estimate of the regular budget for the biennium 2016-2017 by the Member States in the Fifth Committee, nor should the statement be construed as an endorsement on the part of the Member States. Finally, Japan urged that further efforts be made to reduce the amount of the estimates.

Draft resolution III: Establishment of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

38. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Council) said that the implementation of the requests contained in the draft resolution would require the following additional recurrent activities and resources under Section 21, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 Sect. 21): other staff costs ($60,000), travel of staff ($30,000), contractual services ($10,000), general operating expenses ($6,000) and supplies and materials ($4,000) under policymaking organs; and consultants ($20,000) under executive direction and management for the preparation of annual

reports on the regional progress and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

39. Should the Council adopt the draft resolution, it was estimated that total recurrent additional resources of $130,000 would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. An amount of $130,000 would also arise in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019. Those recurrent resources would be required until 2030, in line with the duration of the mandate. The implementation of the requests contained in the draft resolution would require programmatic modifications to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

40. In accordance with established procedures, the additional requirements would be brought to the attention of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, in the context of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its 2016 session. The requirements for the biennium 2018-2019 would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

41. **Mr. Dolbow** (United States of America) said that the United States fully supported the substantive content of the resolution and believed that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development would meaningfully contribute to the advancement of sustainable development in the region. However, it was disappointed that the resolution contained a programme budget implication of $130,000 in the current biennium and a further $130,000 in the next. It called on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) secretariat to fulfil its commitment to mobilize extrabudgetary resources to fund activities related to the Forum, as it had indicated it would be able to do in consultations prior to the adoption of the resolution.

42. *Draft resolution III was adopted.*

43. **Ms. O'Connor** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union stressed that, during the consultation process, it had been led to believe by the ECLAC secretariat that any costs arising from the resolution for the period 2016-2017 would be covered from extrabudgetary resources mobilized by the secretariat. It was surprised and disappointed that the assurance from the ECLAC secretariat had not been correct and called on the ECLAC secretariat to make the utmost effort to cover the costs for the period 2016-2017 from extrabudgetary resources or through redeployment of existing resources. The estimates presented by the Secretariat did not prejudge the submission of the Secretary-General to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the proposed budget for the 2016-2017 biennium. Some estimates could factually not be considered as requirements and should not be perceived as having been endorsed by Member States.

44. **Mr. Aguirre Vacchieri** (Chile) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption by consensus of the resolution and wished to thank Peru in particular for its fundamental role in the negotiation process.

45. **Mr. Imada** (Japan) said that Japan noted that the ECLAC secretariat had clearly stated, upon the adoption of the resolution, that any additional resources, if necessary, would be covered by the extrabudgetary resources of the secretariat. It was on that understanding that Member States had adopted the resolution. For the above reasons, Japan was of the view that the estimates presented in the statement should not prejudge future discussions on the revised estimate of the regular budget for the biennium 2016-2017 by Member States in the Fifth Committee. Japan strongly urged the ECLAC secretariat to cover the amount of the estimates from the extrabudgetary resources of the secretariat.

Draft resolution IV: Venue of the thirty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

46. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

47. *Draft resolution IV was adopted.*

48. **The President** said that he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2016/15), the economic situation in the Economic Commission for Europe region (Europe, North Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States), 2015-2016 (E/2016/16), the overview of economic and social conditions in Africa, 2016 (E/2016/17), the summary of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2016 (E/2016/18), the economic situation and outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean for the

period 2015-2016 (E/2016/19), the summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region, 2015-2016 (E/2016/20) and the notes by the Secretary-General on cooperation among the United Nations regional commissions (A/70/677-E/2016/48 and A/70/677/Add.1-E/2016/48/Add.1).

49. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 16: Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/71/86-E/2016/13 and E/2016/L.22)

50. **Mr. Alami** (Director, Emerging and Conflict-related Issues Division, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), introducing the note of the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/71/86-E/2016/13), said that Israeli policies and practices continued to violate international humanitarian law and international human rights law and undermine the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

51. Israel had created two different justice systems in the West Bank: the Israeli domestic legal system, which was applied for Israeli settlers, and the military system, which was applied for Palestinians. Under the Israeli zoning and planning policies, applications for construction permits for Palestinians were mostly rejected, forcing Palestinians to build without Israeli construction permits, leaving them vulnerable to home demolition and displacement. With the aim of securing a Jewish majority and attaining full control over East Jerusalem, Israel employed policies that stifled the natural growth of the Palestinian population in the city, violated a wide array of Palestinian rights and had resulted in Palestinians living in poverty and suffering from neglect and lack of services.

52. Palestinians continued to suffer from excessive use of force by Israeli security forces and lack of protection from Israeli settler attacks. The detention of Palestinians was often coupled with violations of their rights and international humanitarian law, including the excessive use of administrative detention without charge or trial. Reports of inherent and institutionalized cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and medical negligence of Palestinian detainees, including children, continued to emerge.

53. In the West Bank, Palestinians continued to face displacement mainly owing to policies and practices such as home demolition or takeover, land confiscation, harassment and violence, access restrictions and revocation of residency permits. Israel had resumed home demolition as a punitive measure against families of suspected Palestinian attackers, which was a clear violation of international humanitarian law. Israeli settlers continued their attacks on Palestinians, their property and religious sites with impunity.

54. The nine-year blockade of the Gaza Strip amounted to the collective punishment of 1.8 million Palestinians and had had a devastating effect on the population, economy and infrastructure, including impeding projects by the United Nations and other organizations. . The massive destruction to the water, electricity and wastewater infrastructure and the agricultural sector during the 2014 offensive in Gaza had exacerbated the water and sanitation crisis and the dire environmental conditions.

55. In the West Bank, discriminatory Israeli policies had left Palestinians with limited access to their own water and land. Israeli settlers and companies continued to exploit natural resources and pollute the environment in the Occupied Territory.

56. Longstanding Israeli restrictions, practices and destruction of Palestinian infrastructure had stifled Palestinian economic activity and resulted in an aid-dependent economy, with staggering unemployment rates, high food insecurity rates, a deteriorating health sector and a lack of schools.

57. Israeli violations of international law continued in the occupied Syrian Golan, which Israel had illegally annexed in 1981, with a continued transfer of settlers into Syrian territory, expansion of settlements and exploitation of natural resources. Syrian citizens living under occupation faced discriminatory policies, such as unequal water allocation, restrictions on construction in their villages and expanding their boundaries, whereas Israeli settlements received Israeli Government support and incentives, including active plans to increase their numbers.

58. Israel continued to employ measures and practices in the Occupied Palestinian and Syrian Territories that violated some of the basic principles of the United Nations, including the inadmissibility of acquiring land by force, the principle of non-discrimination and the right of peoples to self-determination. Fifty years of occupation had not only witnessed the obstruction and, at times, reversal of Palestinian socioeconomic development, but also Israel's consolidation of control of the Occupied Territories through a three-tiered approach: population displacement, land grab and suppression of any form of resistance. Israel must end its occupation and comply with international law and legitimacy, otherwise there would be no prospects for peace.

59. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the report attested to a systematic pattern of violations of human rights, international law and international humanitarian law as a result of the illegal, oppressive and destructive policies and measures of Israel. It indicated a steep and alarming deterioration of the situation on the ground that had led to a human rights crisis among the Palestinian population living under occupation. Every aspect of the lives of the Palestinian people was infringed upon and each one of their human rights continued to be violated as the occupying Power persisted in further entrenching its occupation.

60. The assessment of the report represented only a fraction of the violations that Israel, its military forces and settlers continued to perpetuate against the Palestinian people and their land with total impunity, as the international community continued to fail to hold Israel accountable in accordance with the law. The situation had deepened the pervasive sense among the Palestinian people of insecurity and hopelessness regarding any possible redress of that appalling injustice. The occupying Power had not only continued but also intensified all of its illegal actions, including its never-ending colonial settlement enterprise in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the apartheid wall, despite calls by the international community to halt its illegal policies and measures. Israel seemed more interested in consolidating its control over Palestinian land than achieving peace and security. All violations must cease and Israel must be compelled to respect international law. Unless the urgent matter of accountability was addressed, Israel's impunity against the Palestinian people would surely be further emboldened, with disastrous consequences.

61. In Gaza, the existing crisis had affected every single aspect of life, with vastly negative short- and long-term socioeconomic implications that were depriving and disfiguring Palestinian society. The nine-year Israeli blockade of Gaza, which was a repugnant form of collective punishment amounting to a war crime and the source of countless human rights violations, had persisted, deepening poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, health problems and many other social and economic ills. The blockade had in effect imprisoned and isolated the entire population, suffocated socioeconomic life and impeded all efforts for any real recovery.

62. In order to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and make tangible progress towards peace, security and prosperity, Israel must end its prolonged occupation and comply with international law without exception. Failure to expedite that outcome would only increase the human suffering and lead to further destabilization of the grave situation. Such an outcome was imperative to enable Palestine to pursue genuine development in line with the 2030 Agenda and ensure viable economic and social conditions for the Palestinian people. The State of Palestine thus appealed for the continued support of all concerned Member States and the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes to assist the Palestinian people in their steadfast efforts to achieve their rights, including to self-determination, fulfil their legitimate national aspirations and live in justice and dignity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

63. **Mr. Mounzer** (Observer for Syrian Arab Republic) said that Israel's extensive human rights violations were well known. Supported by various powers, that country continued its oppressive practices, which included the confiscation of land and resources for settlement projects. Its settlers exhausted natural resources, commercialized what was produced in those territories, and imposed taxes and other fees on local Arab inhabitants.

64. International support was crucial for those living under the occupation to cope with the terrorist threat posed by non-State actors as well as Israel. Future reports of the Economic and Social Commission for

Western Asia should refer to that Government's support of terrorism in the Golan Heights and the repercussions thereof on the economic and social life of its inhabitants.

65. **Ms. Pereira** (Observer for Ecuador), reiterating comments made during a recent Security Council open debate on the Middle East, said that her delegation was preoccupied by the lack of action by that body with respect to the conflict. Ecuador, which supported the Palestinian cause, was encouraged by recognition of the occupation as key to unrest in the region and acknowledgment of the two-State solution as the path to peace. A great deal of human suffering could have been avoided if the international community had acted in a timely manner. Resolution of the conflict required political solutions that would make it possible to avoid breaches of international humanitarian law and the restriction of human rights.

66. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) said that Algeria stood in solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people and denounced the violations committed against them. It was with regret that his delegation observed the prevailing impunity with which Israel flouted United Nations decisions and resolutions, demonstrating once again the inability of the international community to end the suffering of the Palestinian people.

67. The international community, through the Economic and Social Council, was called upon to put an end to the suffering thereby enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their fundamental human rights and to live independently and freely on their territory.

68. **Mr. Shaker** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that future Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia reports should mention other factors that impacted the Palestinian economy, including property seizures, severe restrictions on fishing zones, and the inability of the Palestinian people to share in the benefits of tourism or the development of oil fields in maritime areas.

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69. **Ms. Chartsuwan** (Observer for Thailand), introducing the draft resolution, said that developments during the most recent reporting period had exacerbated hardships experienced by the Palestinian and Syrian peoples living under occupation, in particular in the Gaza Strip. Already negative trends had worsened, causing further displacement and increased levels of poverty and prevalence of health-related issues, among others. The draft resolution would contribute to the alleviation of the ills suffered by those living under the occupation.

70. **Mr. Dolbow** (United States of America) said that his delegation, disappointed by the draft resolution, felt obligated to call for a vote. In the same way as past resolutions, the text did not address the conflict in a balanced manner, nor did it contribute to advancing the Palestinian and Israeli peoples' aspirations for a secure, peaceful and prosperous future. His Government was committed to supporting the Palestinian people in practical and effective ways. The largest bilateral donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United States had contributed over $380 million in 2015 and over $316 million thus far in 2016 to the Agency. It also contributed significant amounts to bilateral and multilateral programmes and supported United Nations efforts to improve conditions in the region.

71. A permanent status agreement to end the conflict could only be achieved through direct bilateral negotiations. Both Israelis and Palestinians must demonstrate, through their policies and actions, a genuine commitment to the two-State solution in order to reduce tensions, rebuild trust, restore hope and avoid escalation of the conflict.

72. **Mr. Altinors** (Observer for Turkey) said that he wished to join the sponsors of the draft resolution.

73. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

74. **Ms. O'Connor** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote before the voting, said that European Union members of the Council would support the draft resolution with the understanding that the use of the term "Palestine" should not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine. In addition, such usage was without prejudice to the individual positions of European Union member States on that issue and, consequently, on the question of validity of an accession to the conventions and treaties mentioned in the draft resolution. Moreover, the European Union had not

expressed a legal qualification with regard to the term "forced displacement" used in the draft resolution.

75. *At the request of the representative of the United States of America, a recorded vote was taken on draft resolution E/2016/L.22.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Congo, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, United States of America.

Abstained:

Honduras, Panama, Togo.

76. *Draft resolution E/2016/L.22 was adopted by 42 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions.*

77. **Mr. Amer** (Observer for Israel) said that once again the forum of the Economic and Social Council had been transformed into a veritable circus exploited by the Palestinians to pursue their campaign of inflammatory diatribe against Israel. The resolution, which was biased and misleading, was an example of that campaign.

78. The report presented by the representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia reflected poorly on the United Nations as it was based on information from unreliable sources, such as unverified newspaper articles and data gathered by biased non-governmental organizations. It also ignored the major obstacles hindering Palestinian development. With respect to the 2014 hostilities, no mention was made of Hamas' control of the Gaza Strip. The report was unable to maintain neutrality even with respect to human life, failing to adequately cover acts of violence committed by Palestinians against Israelis. Given its determination to blame Israel for every problem suffered by the Palestinians, what else could be concluded except that the Commission was obsessed with Israel?

79. Both the resolution and the report ignored the role of Hamas as well as the failure of the Palestinian leadership to take responsibility for the welfare of the Palestinian people. It was ironic that the report should commend the Palestinian leadership for improved governance given that a recent Palestinian Centre for Policy Research study showed that 79 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank perceived their government institutions to be corrupt. It was also ironic that the resolution should call on the parties to fulfil their obligations with respect to the Middle East Quartet when earlier that month the Palestinians had proudly announced their intention to severe relations with it. Furthermore, in urging Israel to open its borders and facilitate visits to the Syrian Arab Republic, his Government was essentially being asked to send people into the bloody abyss of civil war.

80. Council members should realize that the resolution did not enhance cooperation or improve lives. The conflict inflicted socioeconomic hardships on both sides and efforts to resolve it should begin at the negotiation table.

81. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for State of Palestine) said that the adoption of the resolution reaffirmed the rights of Palestinians and reflected the role the United Nations must play in safeguarding human rights and upholding international law. Multilateral diplomacy could make a tangible difference in the promotion of the rule of law and the amelioration of the conditions born of its absence.

82. The absurdities pronounced by the representative of Israel required a response. The report introduced by the representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was not a distortion of the truth. Rather, it contained proven facts about the actions of the Israeli Government, many of which amounted to war crimes.

83. It was not an "obsession" with Israel that singled that country out, but rather its own non-compliance with international law and utter disrespect for the United Nations and the international community. And although Israel would qualify the adoption of the resolution as a "circus", the fact that 42 Member States had voted in favour of the resolution pointed to the contrary.

84. The representative of Israel had failed to mention that the half-century of oppression, dispossession and subjugation of the Palestinian people lay at the core of

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was time for Israel to acknowledge its occupation of Palestinian land and control and illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, a fact recognized by the overwhelming majority of Member States.

85. The Palestinian leadership, which had declared its intention to pursue all legal and peaceful means to end the unjust occupation, categorically rejected the Israeli representative's claim of incitement. Conversely, Israel encouraged violence and instability, stoking religious and ethnic tensions and feeding the cycle of violence.

86. It was foolish to think that the Palestinians would ever welcome the occupation. Was it truly difficult to understand the Palestinian desire to be free in their homeland? Even the Secretary-General had pointed out that it was human nature to react to occupation, which was a potent incubator for hatred and extremism. The international community must urgently act to uphold international law, bring an end to Israel's crimes and pave the way to a lasting solution to the conflict. No amount of crime or oppression could lower the resistance of the Palestinian people or cause them to surrender their right to live in a free and dignified manner in their home.

87. **The President** said that he took it that the Council wished to take note of the note by the Secretary-General on the Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/71/86-E/2016/13).

88. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.